THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of delivering a package to a destination address associated with said package, said method comprising the steps of:

encoding at least a portion of said destination address as a machine-readable symbol at a first location;

affixing said machine-readable symbol to said package;

sending said package to a second location;

decoding said destination address from said machine-readable symbol;

generating package handling instructions based at least in part on said decoded destination address; and

delivering said package to said decoded destination address.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of affixing said machine-readable symbol to said package comprises:

generating a shipping label for said package, said shipping label including said machine-readable symbol; and

affixing said shipping label to said package.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of generating package handling instructions, comprises generating a package assist label that identifies a delivery vehicle to deliver said package to said destination address.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of generating package handling instructions, comprises generating a package assist label that identifies a delivery vehicle to deliver said package to said destination address and a load position on said delivery vehicle.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the step of delivering said package to said decoded destination address comprises the step of:

placing said package on said delivery vehicle at said load position; and

using said delivery vehicle to deliver said package to said decoded destination address.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of decoding said destination address from said machine-readable symbol comprises using a bar-code scanner to capture said destination address from said machine-readable symbol.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of encoding at least a portion of said destination address as a machine-readable symbol comprises encoding at least a portion of said destination address as a MaxiCode symbol.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of encoding at least a portion of said destination address as a machine-readable symbol comprises the steps of:

compressing at least a portion of said destination address; and

encoding said compressed destination address as a compressed MaxiCode symbol.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the step of compressing at least a portion of said destination address comprises compressing a street address associated with said destination address.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of decoding said destination address from said machine-readable symbol comprises the steps of:

scanning said compressed MaxiCode symbol to capture said compressed destination address; and

decompressing said compressed destination address to create a decoded destination address.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of generating a shipping label comprises generating a smart shipping label that includes one or more of a routing code, a postal bar code, a service icon, a tracking number and a compressed MaxiCode.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of sending said package to a second location comprises sending said package to a destination carrier facility.

13. A method for loading a package on a delivery vehicle, comprising the steps of:

capturing electronically a destination address of a package;

generating package handling instructions based at least in part on said electronically-captured destination address; and

loading said package on said delivery vehicle based at least in part on said package handling instructions.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of capturing electronically a destination address of a package comprises the steps of:

scanning a machine-readable symbol on a shipping label that is affixed to said package to obtain a compressed destination address; and

decompressing said compressed destination address.

15. The method of Claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

performing an address validation routine against said electronically-captured destination address; and

prompting a package loader to review said electronically-captured destination address if said validation routine returns an error.

16. The method of Claim 13, wherein the step of generating package handling instructions comprises the steps of:

identifying a delivery vehicle associated with said destination address;

identifying a load position on said delivery vehicle associated with said destination address; and

generating a package assist label that identifies said load position and said delivery vehicle associated with said destination address.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the step of loading said package on said delivery vehicle comprises loading said package on said load position and said delivery vehicle identified on said package assist label.

18. A method of data compression, comprising the steps of:

analyzing a set of data to identify one or more character strings that appear with the greatest frequency;

associating a unique pattern to each of said one or more character strings; and

substituting said one or more character strings with said associated unique pattern.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of analyzing a set of data comprises analyzing geographic location address data.

20. A system for generating a shipping label with a destination address encoded as a machine-readable symbol, comprising:

a client application in electronic communication with a shipping label tool; and

a shipping label generator in communication with said shipping label tool and with said client application through an application interface of said shipping label tool, said shipping label generator configured to generate said shipping label and pass said shipping label to said client application.

21. A package pre-load assist system, comprising:

a pre-load assist server;

a pre-load application residing on said pre-load assist server, said pre-load application configured to receive a dispatch plan and generate a pre-load plan based at least in part on said dispatch plan;

a pre-load package handling instructions application, said pre-load label application configured to generate package handling instructions based at least in part on a package destination address and said pre-load plan.

22. The system of Claim 21, wherein said pre-load label application is configured to generate package handling instructions in the form of a package assist label.

23. The system of Claim 22, wherein said package assist label identifies a delivery vehicle and a load position on said delivery vehicle.